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EAST AND WEST SERIES

AN INTERPRETER OF THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT

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SRI RAMAKRISHNA PARAMAHANSA

Have faith. Depend on God. Then you will not have to do anything yourself. Mother Kali will do everything for you!

—*SRI RAMAKRISHNA*

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Sri Ramakrishna's Call*

By T. L. VASWANI

The mystic beauty of Sri Ramakrishna's life attracted me in the days of my youth, many years ago. "The first love hath no end," says Chandidas. And my love and reverence for Ramakrishna have grown as the years have gone by.

I think of him as a symbol of that true India which stands for supremacy of the *Atman*, as the West of today stands for supremacy of an intensely individualised intelligence. Organisation attracts attention in these days,—too much attention! We need the inspiration of great lives, of illuminated souls. Untrained in school learning, Ramakrishna received training in the school of the Spirit, and became a sage, a seer, a God-intoxicated man. "Have you seen God?" Vivekananda asked him. "Yes," said Ramakrishna; "I see God as I see you, only more intensely!"

Ramakrishna's name calls up to my mind the image of a Child-man! As a child he would talk to himself, to his body. He was very fond of the sweet cake called *jilebi*. He would humourously call it the "Viceroy's carriage"! Everything else makes way for the "Viceroy's carriage." There is always room for it. And there is always room for the *jilebi!* Ramakrishna simply loved it. One day, he comes to meet Keshab at his house.

*Written in 1927.

March 15 is sacred as Sri Ramkrishna's birthday.

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Keshab sends for a plate full of *jilebis* and places it before Ramakrishna. He begins to talk to himself :—"*Khabo?* (Will you eat?) *Khabo? Khabo?* (Will you eat?)" And then he begins, child-like, to eat his favourite sweets!

His child-like soul rose above the conventions of civilisation. He attended an anniversary meeting of the Brahmo Samaj. He was asked to be well-dressed in *dhoti* and *chaddar*. "It will pain me," said Maharishi Divendra Nath Tagore to him, "to see any one criticise you for being shabbily dressed." Ramakrishna's reply was characteristic :—"I can't be dressed like a Babu." Ramakrishna always wished to be, not a civilised Babu but a simple child of the Mother.

"Shall I teach you Vedanta?" says Totapuri to the Saint. "I don't know," he answers, "let me ask the Mother." He goes to the Temple, speaks to God the Mother, and then returns with the reply :—"Yes, teach me. Mother permits."

His face was so child-like. His countenance was lit up with the smile of a child. In him was no crookedness of the clever, no guile of the civilised. "God," he said, "is to be reached through child-like faith and gentleness." Many revered him as their Guru. But he said :—"I am only a child of the Mother. The word, guru, pricks me as a thorn."

Simple, transparent, he had not the egoism of the so-called great. In his heart was tenderness of the child. "As potato or brinjal, when boiled, becomes tender," he said, "so a man becomes tender when he attains to perfection : he loses all egoism." Am I wrong in saying the

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perfect man is the perfect Child? "Of such," said Jesus, "is the Kingdom of Heaven." It is the Kingdom of Little Ones.

A little before Ramakrishna passed away, he began, like a child, to play with flowers. "The child-mood," he said, "is upon me. I behold the Lord within and without."

Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar was a great scholar. Ramakrishna went to see him. On the way, Ramakrishna prayed to God :— "Mother! I am going to see a scholar. But you know, Mother! I am absolutely devoid of learning." Ramakrishna was always so simple, so artless! The talk between the Pandit and the Saint was stimulating. The Pandit put learned questions. How beautiful, how truly philosophical the answers of the Saint! Wisdom is profounder than learning.

A German theologian, Ruemmer, rightly urged that the "great secret of the saints" was humility. It was the secret of Ramakrishna. He spoke of his "simplicity and illiteracy." His "illiteracy" made all the more transparent his illuminated heart. His simplicity was the simplicity of St. Francis. Like Krishna, Ramakrishna loved children. Like Jesus, Ramakrishna blessed them. Like Francis, Ramakrishna communed with birds and nature. He had the non-attachment of a child, the gentleness of a child, the sweet unconsciousness of a child, the loving naturalness of a child, the utter unconvention of a child.

And in his heart was such tender love for the poor. He would eat of the leavings of beggars in the temple. He would sweep, as a scavenger,

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the dirtiest place. One day, he was travelling with a rich disciple, Mathura Babu, to Banaras. On the way, they halted, for a day, in a village. Ramakrishna saw the poor people there. His heart was filled with sadness. He said to his disciple :—"You are a steward of the Mother. Feed these poor people today and give a piece of cloth to every one." The disciple calculated and hesitated. It would cost so much. Ramakrishna wept and said :—"I must not go to Banaras. Let me stay with the poor people here." He went and sat among them. The disciple was moved. He fed the poor. He ordered out cloth for them. And he and Ramakrishna resumed their journey to Banaras.

The greatest need of modern civilisation is simplicity. So much of our life is a dance of trivialities and superficialities, of pleasures and sensations,—a dance of death. The child-like spirit is absent. Calculation-consciousness is growing. The disease of being prominent and great is spreading. The creed of ambition is popular with the nation's youth. Therefore I plead with them for a new study of the life and message of Ramakrishna.

Standing, one day, on the roof of the Dakshineshwar Temple, as the bells rang and the conch-shells sounded for evening worship, Ramakrishna in the strength of his simplicity cried at the top of his voice :—"Where are you, my boys? Come unto me! O ye that are young. I cannot bear to live without you." In that voice was the anguish of a holy heart. Is the Voice stilled? It rings

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Turn Your Face To The Light !

By HENRY THOMAS HAMBLIN

A man came to Jesus and said :—"Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest." But Jesus merely answered :—"Foxes have holes and the birds of the air their nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head."

The reason Jesus answered in this way was that He wanted the man to understand that to follow Him would mean a stepping out into a life of complete trust in the Spirit, without any dependence on the arm of flesh. To follow Jesus means stepping out into the void.

Nothing before, nothing behind:
The steps of faith
Fall on the seeming void, and find
The rock beneath.

These words of Whittiers put the whole matter in a nutshell. There is nothing before us. There is nothing guaranteed us : we simply have to trust. There is no light given us, even. We have to take hold of the Lord's hand and step out with Him into the darkness.

I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year :—
"Give me a light, that I may tread safely into the unknown."
And he replied :—
"Go out into the darkness, and put your hand into the hand of God.

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That shall be to you better than light, and safer than a known way."

These noble words of M. Loise Haskins, which were quoted once by the King in a broadcast to the Empire, illustrate what I mean. God gives us no guarantee for the future. We can only trust Him. If God were to give us guarantees, then we would be tempted to trust in the guarantees instead of in Him. So we are given no guarantee, in order that we may trust God only.

Yes, we have to step out into the void. Then, if we do this, we find the rock beneath our feet. Nothing before, nothing behind, nothing under our feet, apparently. We have to step out into the unknown, trusting only in Him,—the One who can never fail.

Nothing behind. Another man who was called by Jesus said that he would like to go back and say good-bye to his relations. But Jesus said :— "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God."

There must be no looking back to past ease and slothfulness of spirit; no longing for "the beggarly elements of the world" or "the fleshpots of Egypt." No slipping back into the barren ways, in which no High Watch is kept and in which there is no early-morning contact made with God.

No, there must be no looking back. Neither must there be any useless longing for the future. Actually, there is only the Now, while it is equally true that tomorrow never comes. If we spend our time in day-dreaming of the future, or of a future state, then we paralyse our present effort.

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Whereas, if we do the best we can with today, finding God in it, then the future can take care of itself, for it is in God's hands.

But while there must be no looking back, and no longing for the future, yet we must go forward. Life is movement, circulation, progress : it never can stand still. The tides never stop their motion : the stars fail not to come nightly to the sky, while the sun continues faithfully to rise on every morning. It is the same with life : it flows forward in a never-failing stream. Consequently, we must go forward with it. We must not lag behind, neither must we be too anxious to get ahead. There is a time for everything and everybody, also a place for everything and everybody, in the wise economy of God.

Some of us may fret and fume, trying to race ahead too fast. To such the oft-quoted words of John Burroughs must surely come like healing balm to a hot, irritable wound.

I stay my haste, I make delays,
For what avails this anxious pace?
I stand amid the Eternal Ways.
And what is mine shall know my face.

Yes, we must go forward, leaving all behind, and trusting our all to God : yet at the same time we must go forward not in anxious hurry, but at God's pace. Then everything becomes effortless. Once we get into God's rhythm, all strain, anxiety and struggle pass away.

We must go forward, because all life and creation are moving forward. This is the law of life, and we must obey it. If we go forward at God's

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pace, then we are carried along on the crest of the wave : we find that all things are ours, and all the Divine Forces are ministering to us.

The object of life is to carry us forward to ever-increasing joy and blessedness. Perfect everything is what God has designed for us and for which we are destined. When we go forward at God's pace, then we are carried forward in such a way as to make contact with all the Divine good which God has prepared for us, and prepared us for. To quote John Burroughs again :—

Asleep, awake, by night or day,
The friends I seek are seeking me.
No wind can drive my bark astray,
Nor change the tide of destiny.

No, we are destined to a High Estate, and we are being carried forward to inherit it. What we have to do is to go God's way, at God's pace, just at the right tempo.

God desires for us our highest good. Perfection of everything is the Divine Idea. If, however, we are held back by old habits and indulgences, we can never inhabit the Kingdom. The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, said Jesus. Change your minds, accordingly, so as to think in terms of Heavenly perfection. What you hold in your mind, that you create. Hold, therefore, in your mind your highest possible concept of Divine Perfection, and then go forward, never looking back.

Directly we go forward, trusting in God, taking hold of His hand, and doing everything in love, we enter into the sweep of the Divine plan and

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intention. The great secret is a return to God. There has been a proceeding of the Spirit into matter : now there is a returning to Him from Whom all things proceed and to which all things return. If we try always to see everything in the light of this great truth, and if we try also to "see" everyone especially those about whom we may be concerned, with his or her face turned towards the Light, marching towards the Hills of God, then we find a great change for the better taking place.

Yes, it is all a returning. "In returning and rest shall ye be saved. In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." It is a rising from glory to glory, to higher and better and more glorious things. It is a constant progression, expansion and unfoldment. But it all begins with leaving our all (the all of the selfhood), to follow the Lord of Love, Who has been with us all our days, and Who will never let us go.

What is it that I am trying to accomplish by writing and sending out these lessons? It is this. I want to help other people to know God's Inward Peace, to float out on to the ocean of God's Love and also to be filled with Heavenly Joy such as can never be described. I want others really to know God and to enter into blissful union with Him. Though I cannot describe the blissful state, yet I can experience it, at will. And the greatest and deepest desire of my heart is that others should experience the highest bliss and indescribable joys of Heaven also. I want others to enter the Timeless Now, and to realise their oneness with the Eternal. I want others to be

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raised up above time and space into the Timeless, and to realise that present events need not affect them any more than the events which took place at the time of Moses. You, dear friend, belong to that which is never disturbed or affected by outward events,—the Inward and Eternal, and which, in your true essence, you are, really and truly. "For we know that if your earthly house or this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens." That is your true body, like unto the Lord's glorious resurrection body, clothing the real you, eternal in the Heavens. That is your state. It is your true state *now!*

Where Is God ?

Where is God ?

Not in temples of stone or marble, nor in documents and parchments of the past is the Living Lord. Thy God is in thy sphere of work, thy field of duty.

Not afar in a forest, nor high up on a hill-top may you go to meet your God. You may greet Him in your office, your shop, your kitchen, your school, your study room.

Of a saint it is said, he found God in the shining of a tin-vessel.

The Lord will not be seen by those who leave their work to see Him. But He entered the humble, little house of a woman who sat there to serve her husband with a longing in her heart to see the Lord.

Through the window of your daily duty may you daily see the Lord !

—T. L. VASWANI

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What Life Has Taught Me

By T. L. VASWANI

What has life taught me? How much may I not learn in every humble effort to unveil myself!

One of the earliest lessons I have endeavoured to learn is that life's richest treasures may be found only within oneself. I need only to listen, to pay attention, to *accept* life.

For I can take no step to Him,—the Great Guru, the Great Teacher and Leader of Life,—until He has first taken many steps to meet me and bless my pilgrimage. In my search for Him is immanent His search for me. And He comes in many ways.

In silence He comes,—and in tumults and storms. In the beauty of the dawn and the glow of the sunset He comes! In the procession of time and the appearance of the Holy Ones and the truly Vital Ones of History,—the True, the Good, the Beautiful,—He comes! It is for me to wait. He crosses the path and comes to me with His Gift Divine,—the Gift of Love! It is for me to *accept* life!

Who accepts life? In the teaching of the Sages of the East, I hear the voice :—"Simplify! Simplify!" To accept life is to be simple in life : and to be simple is to be true and reverent. Every day is, as it was in the days of the early Aryans, divine, divinely beautiful. And every day brings with it the gifts which we may well use in the service of the lowly and the lost.

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In these few words is the teaching, as I understand it, of the Rishis, the Sages of India. In this teaching is the essence of the Hindu Faith. I bow down in reverence to all the great ones of humanity,—to Krishna and Christ, to Buddha and Muhammad, to Zoroaster and Mahavira, to Francis and Kabir, to Chaitanya and Ramakrishna. But I do not feel shy of the inspiration of the word and wisdom of the "Hindu" Faith. And I do not accept the view which regards "Hinduism" as being "fundamentally pessimistic" and "not conducive to an active, purposeful life." The Gita recognises the value of meditation : but the Gita, also, urges that meditation must flower into action and service,—into *yagna*, worship, sacrifice!

Help others,—is what I have said to myself, again and again,—specially, since India's blundering "Partition." Help others,—hath Life said to me. For piteous is the need of my brothers and sisters, everywhere. Not a few have perished in the process we call "migration"; and my heart remembers not a few of my brothers and sisters who are gone, leaving me,—lonely.

Help others! Therefore, I must turn away from "egotism,"—from the conceit of "I,"—and seek communion with the Divine One. In my heart I see there is an aspiration, a lonely cry :—

Some call it longing,
Others call it God !

I take hold of a hand and find it is Krishna's Hand! I hear storm and tempest : then I walk and know Christ is blessing me and I am moving

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Homewards! I gaze on the sunset's radiant glow : then I feel that beyond the sun's decline and beyond all suns and moons and stars, is a brighter World of God beyond all gods. Then, looking around, I see that the world is tossed to and fro by tempest and storm : and my heart cries to Krishna and Christ, to Buddha and Nanak, to Kabir and Tiruvalluvar, the weaver-Saint of South India. And, with love and humility in my heart, I say to all who strive and suffer :—

Feel not weary and forlorn ! But in faith, build on !
Ye children of storm and of Siva whose dance is death !
Press on ! Build on ! Sing the Song of the Ancient One !

SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S CALL [*Contd. from page 4*]

in some hearts. May it ring in a million hearts!

The days are darkening. India is in agony. An eminent man spoke some time ago of the "bankruptcy of science." Many there be today who feel sad at the bankruptcy of civilisation. The world's greatest need is,—God-consciousness. India, the first-born of the nations of the morn, India has for ages taught the truth that the soul of civilisation is,—God. To this ancient message of India, Ramakrishna calls you, youngmen! "Come unto me," he says, "I cannot bear to live without you." How many will hearken to the message? How many will live it? How many will take it into the politics and life of the Nation? One thing I know. The problems of today will not be solved without the light of the Ancient Wisdom that sees in all religions the One Eternal Self, and in all nations the One Spirit of Divine Humanity.

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You Are Your Own Prison !

By J. P. VASWANI

Yesterday, a dear and esteemed brother met me. There were tears in his eyes. And in a voice touched with plaintiveness, he said to me :— "The spiritual urge is growing within me, from more to more. I feel that I can no longer do the humdrum duties of an office Assistant. Surrounded by files and meaningless papers, I feel unhappy, miserable. I want to resign and belong wholly to my Guru and my God!"

For this brother I have always cherished the highest regard. I have wished to learn of him many things, for he is far more advanced than I am in the spiritual path. I quietly listened to his words and reflected over them in silence.

True it is that at one time or the other, the words are wrung out of the hearts of the vast majority of men :—"I feel unhappy, miserable!" And the mind, which does not rest content until it has discovered a reason for every happening, a cause for every effect, examines outer conditions and places its finger on this circumstance or that as the cause of unhappiness. I am unhappy because I have to work in the secular atmosphere of an office. I am unhappy because of straitened financial circumstances. I am unhappy because of an incurable disease. I am unhappy because certain people spread false and malicious reports against me. I am unhappy because I cannot get the girl I love. I am unhappy because my children

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have fallen into evil ways.....And so on.

Princes are unhappy: peasants are unhappy: unhappy is the whole world. Unhappy, because we are moving on the superfices of life. Our lives are shallow. In our search for happiness we are busy chasing the shadow-shapes of pleasure and possessions and power. The more we run after the things of the earth, the more restless we grow, until the day comes when we can run no longer and we realise, too late, that we have wasted in vain the golden opportunities of our human birth. Then we weep and cry in vain.

"Wake up! Wake up!" sings Kabir in a number of his most moving songs. "This is the hour and this the moment!" It is not yet too late. To "wake up" is to know that the visible world has little or no value, the Unseen is the Real : this alone counts. The years that I have spent in pursuit of what the world gives and the world takes away are wasted in vain. And the very first cry on waking up is the cry of King Solomon :— "Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity!" A longing seizes my heart for something I cannot define : a thirst springs within me for the love of Him whom the sages have called by many names, one of them being God. And I begin to see that without Him I am nothing. "Man is insufficient without God, because without God he would not even be!"

The world, with all its goods and honours, cannot satisfy me and I begin to see that there is "an abyss of nothingness at the very heart of our being." My soul aspiring to the Eternal, the Infinite, sings with a new meaning the song of

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the great Sindhi poet, Valiram :—

Fellow-pilgirms on the path !
Why must ye wander still ?
Come, comrades, come
And drink the living waters
Of Nama,—the Name Divine !
Drink ! And in ecstasy see
How all things move
To the vanishing Point :
And only the One remains !

To "wake up" is to realise the utter worthlessness of all that we are seeking. The surface life which keeps us absorbed is empty as a dream. There is a life in the depths. It is the life which you and I are meant to live. "Most of us live on the surface of ourselves," says a Christian saint. "Underneath is a fathomless sanctuary where Spirit and spirit can meet." There it is that the Beloved waits for us, and if we will but move on to meet Him, we shall receive the treasures of His Love. And His joy will be our joy : and His freedom will be our freedom : and His peace will be our peace. Then, in the words of the great German mystic, John Tauler, "man is no longer troubled by anything. He is recollected, quiet, and really himself and becomes daily more detached, spiritualised, and contemplative, for God is within him, reigning and working in the depths of his soul."

Among thousands of men scarcely one sets out in search of God,—says the Gita. Many of those who seek the Lord, alas! do not seek Him aright. I have heard a number of my brothers exclaim :—

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"How I wished I lived, far from the madding crowds of men, in the depths of a jungle or on the heights of a mountain-peak!" They forget that it is not *where* they live that matters but *how* they live. It is not *where* they work or *what* work they do that counts but *how* they work. By this is not meant that all places and all works are alike. Surely to meditate is better than to talk to people and the sanctuary is a better place than the market. But wherever we are and whatever we do, let us maintain the same yearning towards God and an equanimity of mind which cannot be perturbed. This will enable us to live and move and have our being in God.

So many, however, believe that they will never be happy unless they are in a particular place or doing a particular type of work. And because their desires are not fulfilled they feel an inner restlessness and an urge to "escape" life which they misinterpret as spiritual awakening. Actually, it is no better than self-will. What I need to escape is myself, and no outer condition. When I think that this condition or that is a hindrance to my spiritutal progress, I suffer from an illusion. What hinders me is myself, my attitude to men and matters. This, indeed, is the root cause of restlessness.

Spiritual life begins with forsaking oneself. "You are your own prison," says Pir Jamal. "Arise and quickly depart!" "The heart inquired of the soul, what is the beginning of this business?" asks the Sufi Saint, Ansari of Herat, and answers :— "The beginning of it is the annihilation of self." And again :—

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The way to the Beloved
Is the way of self-loss !
There is no other secret to be revealed,
And more than this is not known to me !

The cause of my restlessness is myself. Wherever I go,—be it the highest heaven,—so long as I carry the self with me, I shall continue to be restless. I can run away from places and outer conditions : but I cannot run away from myself. Until I have learnt to free me from myself, I can have no real rest and peace of mind. He who seeks peace in outer things and places seeks it in vain. The more he seeks, the further he recedes from the goal.

What, then, should a man do? He must learn to abandon himself. He must practise the one only renunciation,—renunciation of the self. He who renounces himself renounces all things. Then, like King Janaka, he can live the life of a free man even in the comforts and luxuries of a palace. Wonderful are the words of the great German mystic, Meister Eckhart :—"If a man has renounced a kingdom, or the whole world, and retains himself, he has renounced nothing. Indeed, if a man abandons himself, whatever he may then retain, whether it be wealth or honour, or whatever it may be, he has renounced all things."

True renunciation is not measured by the things a man gives up. True renunciation is of the will and of desires. A man may have ever so little of the goods and wealth of the world. Yet, if he has desires, he is attached to the things of the world. He desires them : he longs to possess

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them, and in that measure holds them as his own. When, under God's grace, such a man learns the lesson of true renunciation,—which is inner renunciation,—he will have given up not merely the few things he actually possesses but all other things to which he clung in his desires. The man who renounces his all, be it ever so little,—renounces the whole world. The renunciation of a poor man is no less than the renunciation of a king.

Francis, the youth, when he left his home to become a disciple of Christ, had only a pair of clothes on his body : that was all he possessed. And when his father challenged him in the court, Francis gave up for the Love of God, his two garments and became naked. Francis renounced all he had : he renounced the whole world as though it were entirely his. Wealthy men, rich disciples of Saint Francis, sold all they had and distributed among the poor and followed in the footsteps of their Master. But the renunciation of Francis,—though it meant the giving up of but a pair of clothes,—shines with a brilliance which centuries have not dimmed, for his renunciation was complete.

The life of self-abandon is the true life. In this you ask for nothing, desire nothing, claim nothing, but accept all situations and circumstances with a heart that rejoices in the Lord. It is a life of child-like trust in the All-Loving Mother. She provides all the needs of Her children. In several cases She provides even before the need is felt.

"Which book would you recommend to me for

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study?" a dear brother asked me the other day. And I said to him :—"The book meant for you will come to you!"

If only we could lay all our trust in God! If only we thought of Him as our only guide and followed His leading! What a glorious life ours would be! Freed from fever and fret, from worry and anxiety, from all the cares that crush a man down, it would truly be a life of divine companionship,—man living as a friend with God, talking to Him, hearing Him talk, loving Him, being loved by Him.

Such a man abides in God. God's strength is his strength. And he feels secure in His Loving Arms even as a child feels secure in the arms of its mother. Such a man has no burdens. Such a man has no fear. He knows that all is well. Again and again, he turns to God and smiles a smile more beautiful than sunrise. It is the smile of the soul that constantly gazes at the Beloved.

Unencumbered and free, he walks his way, singing as he goes. He looks to God for all : he relies on God for all. He does not ask for this or that to happen : he does not even ask that he may become good or loving or kind or spiritual. He asks for nothing : he accepts everything. One of the noblest prayers in the mystical literature of the world is that of a Sufi saint :—

Lord !
I, a beggar,
Ask of Thee
More than a thousand kings
May ask of Thee !

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Each one asks of Thee
Something he needs :
I ask of Thee
To give me Thyself !

The man of abandon does not even ask the Lord to give him the gift of Himself. He prays but one prayer :—"Thy will be done!" This is the prayer of all prayers. It surpasses all other prayers as the peak of the Himalayas surpasses all other mounts and hills.

The man of self-abandon does not pray for this or that to happen. The *mantram* of his life is expressed in the words which Arjuna utters in the concluding section of the Gita :—"*Karishe vachanam tava.*" "I shall act according to Thy word and Thy will!"

Jesus desired to escape the bitter humiliation of death on the cross. "Let this cup pass from me," he prayed; but immediately he added :—"Let not my will but Thy will be done!

In surrender to the Will Divine is the secret of that true life which is rooted in God. Then and only then is our separate existence, our individuality annihilated. Then and only then are we identified with the work and the will of the Lord who has sent us here not without a divine purpose. This is true stripping of the soul. This is the mystical meaning behind *vastrapaharana*,—Sri Krishna's stealing away the clothes of the *gopis* as they bathed in the sacred Jamuna river. Not until we are stripped of all "clothing" may we live as God wishes us to live in His eternal life.

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Daily Inspiration :

Thus Spake Sri Ramakrishna

[Excerpts from the utterances and writings of Sri Ramakrishna]

March 1 **Born in Vain!**

He who, having attained the human birth, so difficult to get, does not attempt to realise God in this very life, has been born in vain!

March 2 **Vision of God**

It is said that in this *kaliyuga*, if a man can weep for God one day and one night, he sees Him.

March 3 **Repeat the Name**

Repeat the Holy Name and sing the glories of God and dwell in the company of the Wise and the Pure!

March 4 **Solitude**

The mind, immersed day and night in worldliness,—in worldly duties and responsibilities,—cannot dwell on God.

It is most necessary to go into solitude, from time to time, and think of God.

March 5 **Name And Fame**

Those who seek name and fame are under a delusion. They forget that everything is ordained by the Great Dispenser of all things.

The wise man says always, "It is Thou, O Lord! It is Thou!" But the ignorant and the deluded say, "It is I! It is I!"

March 6 **Truly Free**

A man is truly free, even here in this embodied

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state, if he knows that God is the true agent and he by himself is powerless to do anything.

March 7 **Practise Religion**

It is easy to utter *sa, re, ga, ma, pa, dha, ni,* with the mouth, but it is difficult to play them on an instrument.

So it is easy to talk of religion, but difficult to practise it!

March 8 **Book-reading**

To explain God after merely reading the scriptures is like explaining to a person the city of Banaras after seeing it only in a map!

March 9 **Three Forces of Love**

Love God even as the mother loves her child, the chaste wife her husband, and the worldly man his wealth.

Add together these three forces of love, and give it all to God. Then you will certainly see Him!

March 10 **Three Fetters**

One cannot have the vision of God as long as man has these three,—shame, hatred and fear.

March 11 **Restlessness**

Nothing is achieved in spiritual life without yearning.

By constantly living in the company of holy men, the soul becomes restless for God.

This yearning is like the state of mind of a man whose dear child is ill. His mind is perpetually restless, thinking how the child may be cured.

March 12 **Do It Yourself!**

What you wish others to do, do yourself!

March 13 **Too Late!**

The parrot cannot be taught to sing if it becomes old and the membrane of its throat becomes

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hardened. It must be taught before the collar line appears and while it is young.

So, in old age it is difficult for the mind to be fixed on God. It can be easily done in youth.

March 14 **The Worldly Man**

So long as the iron is in the furnace it is red-hot, but it becomes black soon after it is taken out.

So is also the worldly man. So long as he is in a temple or in the company of holy men, he is full of religious emotions, but no sooner does he come out of those associations than he loses them all.

March 15 **The Believer**

As a nail cannot be driven into a stone but can easily be driven into the earth, so the advice of a sage does not affect the soul of a worldly man but enters easily into the heart of a believer.

March 16 **Washerman's Store-house**

Let not thy mind be as the store-house of a washerman. He fills his room with the unclean clothes of others, but when those clothes are clean and ready for use, they go to their respective owners, and he has nothing to call his own.

March 17 **The World**

The world is like an *amrha* fruit, all skin and stone but very little pulp, the eating of which produces colic.

March 18 **Woman and Gold**

As persons living in a house infested with venomous snakes are always alert and cautious, so should men living in the world be always on their guard against the allurements of woman and gold.

March 19 **God First!**

First gain God and then gain wealth, but do not do the contrary.

If after acquiring spirituality you lead a wordly

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life, then you will never lose your peace of mind.

March 20 **Abhyasa is Necessary**

So long as the fire is beneath, the milk boils and bubbles. Remove the fire and it is quiet again.

Similarly, the heart of the seeker boils with enthusism so long as he goes on with his spiritual exercises, but afterwards it cools down.

March 21 **Beware of Miracle-Workers !**

Do not visit miracle-workers! They are wanderers from the path of truth. Their minds have become entangled in the meshes of psychic powers, which lie in the way of pilgrims as temptations.

Beware of these powers and desire them not!

March 22 **Be like a Boat!**

A boat may stay in water, but water should not stay in the boat.

An aspirant may live in the world, but the world should not live within him.

March 23 **Detachment**

The man who has a carbuncle on his back talks with his friends and others, and even carries out undertakings, but his mind is all the while on his pain.

Likewise, perform your duties unattached with your mind always fixed on God.

March 24 **Three Things**

Living in the world, one is safe, if one has (1) *viveka* (discrimination of the Real from the unreal); and (2) *vairagya* (dispassion for worldly things); and along with these (3) intense devotion to God.

March 25 **Remember the Mother!**

When you are forced by circumstances to go to a place of temptations, always remember the Divine Mother. She will protect you from the

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many evils that may be lurking even in your heart.

The presence of the Mother will shame you away from evil deeds and evil thoughts.

March 26 **If You Wish to See God!**

If you wish to see God, have firm faith in the efficacy of repeating the Name of Hari and try to discriminate between the Real from the unreal.

March 27 **Burn Away Your Sins**

Sing with *bhakti* the hallowed Name of the Lord, and the mountain of your sins will vanish, just as a mountain of cotton will burn to ashes and disappear if but a spark of fire falls on it.

March 28 **Humility**

To become great one must be humble. The nest of the sky-lark is on the earth below, but it soars high into the sky.

High ground is not fit for cultivation. Low ground is necessary, so that water may stand on it.

March 29 **Our Duty**

Our duty is to fall down and adore where others only bow!

March 30 **Be Poor in Spirit**

If you wish to thread a needle, make the thread pointed and remove all protuding fibres. Then it will easily pass through the eye of the needle.

So if you wish to concentrate your heart and soul on God, be meek, humble and poor in spirit, and remove all the spreading filaments of desire.

March 31 **Who Seeks Shall Find!**

Men shed streams of tears because sons are not born to them. Others wear away their hearts in sorrow because they cannot get riches. But, alas! how many are there who sorrow and weep for not having seen God? Very few, indeed!

Verily, he who seeks Him, who weeps for Him, attains Him !

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News and Notes

By "Gulshan"

Beloved Dadaji's 94th Birthday

Beloved Dadaji Sri T. L. Vaswani's 94th Birthday,—the 25th of November,—was celebrated at Poona in an atmosphere of rich devotion and enthusiasm. It was also celeberated at a number of places in India and abroad.

At Poona, a five-day programme, commencing from the 21st, was organised by the Brotherhood Association. Hundreds of pilgrims, from different parts of India and abroad, came to participate in the sacred celebrations. Free lodging and boarding was provided to the pilgrims.

An important item in the programme was service of *Daridra Narayana*, on whom Beloved Dadaji generously sprinkled the waters of his ever-flowing fountain of love.

On November 24th, cash and articles of daily use, such as cooking oil, soap cakes, tea, match-boxes, sugar, were distributed among the needy *sufed-posh* sisters.

On November 25th, thousands of *Daridra Narayana* were fed and were given coins. This programme of service was followed by *langar*,—fellowship meals,—at which over 3000 pilgrims and devotees participated in an atmosphere of *Nam-kirtan*.

Birthday Purse :—At the evening fellowship meeting on the 25th, tributes of love and affection were paid to Beloved Dadaji and his noble work. A purse of Rs. 11,37,732 was dedicated to Beloved Dadaji. A major portion of the amount was earmarked by the donors for Sadhu Vaswani Vidya Nagar, the proposed centre of New Education. Beautiful was the donors' reverence which prompted them to respond richly to the appeal and thereby bear witness to the fact that Beloved Dadaji was, to them, an Immortal Reality.

Dada Lila :—On the evening of the 24th, the students of the Mira Institutions enacted moving scenes from the inspiring life of Beloved Dadaji, which awakened new aspira-

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tions in the hearts of many.

Ratha Yatra :—On the afternoon of the 23rd, thousands of people,—men, women and children,—of different communities joined in the pilgrim-procession adorned by a beautifully decorated *ratha* (chariot) containing Beloved Dadaji's life-size portrait. The pilgrim-procession started from Beloved Dadaji's sacred Samadhi and wended its way through the streets of the city, with the devotees lost in singing the Name of God in ecstatic love. It was one of the biggest processions of its kind in the city, and hundreds turned out into the streets to pay their respectful homage to Dadaji, who had brought them closer to God by his unflinching devotion to the service of humanity and to God.

The Passing Away of a Saint

One by one, they go, saints, *bhaktas*, mystics and men of God. And now comes the news that on February 7, Shri Bankey Behari Maharaj of Brindaban moved on to the eternal abode of the Lord Radha-Krishna, whom he loved with no ordinary love. In love of the Lord he renounced his lucrative work as a lawyer thirty-five years ago, and became a hermit in the holy land of Brindaban. "What is your goal in life?" he was asked. And he answered :— "To behold Lord Radha-Krishna face to face!"

At the fellowship meeting (*satsang*) on the evening of February 20, Brother J. P. Vaswani paid a warm tribute of love and reverence to this humble, holy man of God. Brother J. P. Vaswani said :—"Shri Bankey Behari was Krishna-possessed, Krishna-intoxicated. He shunned the glare and glitter of life. He surrendered his all to God and he lived a hidden life in the Hidden God! Renouncing all thought of name and fame, he entered deeper and deeper within himself. He became a hidden root, and out of him sprang flowers of beauty. Some of those flowers, in the form of books which he wrote, will be a source of inspiration to generations unborn. Homage to him!"

The poor were fed in the sacred memory of this holy man of God.

Thrice-Blessed Day

The 25th of December was a thrice-blessed day. Firstly, it marked the coming into the world of Blessed Jesus, who was pure and stainless and everfree. Secondly, it was the

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Gita Jayanti day, the day on which the Lord Sri Krishna sang his immortal song, the Bhagavad Gita, on the battle-field of Kurukshetra, in the midst of ranging armies. Principal J. P. Vaswani, in his address to the students of the Mira College, said :—"There is a harmony in the teaching of the Gita and that of the New Testament. The Gita emphasises that the way to freedom and fulfilment is the way of sacrificial love, of which the symbol is the Cross."

Thirdly, it was the sacred Shanti Yagna day,—the day sacred to the memory of Sister Shanti, a pure child of God, who worshipped both Sri Krishna and Jesus in the shrine of her heart!

New Year's Message

The 1st of January was celebrated with great enthusiasm on the Mira Campus. Beloved Dadaji, in his recorded *upadesh*, reminded us that the New Year brought with it the message:—"Be new! Cast off the old garments of sensuality and selfishness, and build a radiant future!" The future lies before us like a sheet of untrodden snow. We must take care how we tread it, for our every step will show. Beloved Dada told us, in his inimitable way, that we should pray to the Lord to grant us new hearts, filled with unselfish love for Him and service of the poor and needy, who, according to Beloved Dadaji, are verily the broken images of the Lord Himself!

New Hearts

Asked to give a message for the New Year, Brother J. P Vaswani said :—

"Another New Year is come. When will humanity become new?

"Industrialism will not make the world new. Nor social nor economic planning. A new devotion to the Spirit will make us new!

"New Life is needed. New hearts are needed,—hearts filled with pure, unselfish love.

"And today I prayed :—'O Lord! Grant me a heart which may be a home of love and longing,—longing for Thee and love for all Thy children who suffer and are in pain! And birds and animals, too, are Thy children!' "

Dr. Relwani's Consulting Rooms

On the New Year's day, the opening ceremony of Dr. Relwani's Consulting rooms was performed by Brother J. P.

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Vaswani at 4 Irwin Road, Near Quarter Gate, Poona. Brother J. P. Vaswani offered prayers and invoked God's benedictions on the new consulting rooms.

Dr. G. S. Relwani, M. R. C. P., is a heart-specialist who, with his wonderful qualities of head and heart, has endeared himself to many of his patients. He is a man of deep sympathy and understanding. In his eyes is love of those that suffer and are in pain. For seven years he worked with Dr. K. B. Grant at the Ruby Hall Nursing Home.

May his new consulting rooms be so blessed by the All-Blessed One that they may become a centre of blessing to many!

Shield of Compassion

At the second National Conference on Animal Welfare which was held at Bangalore from 7th to 10th December, a Silver Shield, a Scroll of Honour and a cash prize of Rs. 500/- were awarded to St. Mira's English-Medium School, Poona, in recognition of the outstanding work being done by the School for instilling in the minds of the students affection for animals through an excellent humane education programme.

Beloved Dada wrote many years ago :—"May the Mira Schools teach their pupils to approach birds and beasts in a spirit of reverence as children of Sri Krishna! Holy, holy, holy is every creature. Touch ye these children of the Lord with reverence and love! Harm them not! But serve them in deep humility!" This teaching of Beloved Dada is being translated into action in St. Mira's Schools through the indefatiguable efforts of Shri Gangaram Sajandas, the Secretary of the Brotherhood Association and Manager of St. Mira's English-Medium School. His tender heart bleeds for the dumb, defenceless children of God. If there is one work dear to his heart it is this,—teaching children to be kind to brother birds and animals. Our affectionate salutations to him!

Maha Yagna

A 2-days programme was organised by the Brotherhood Association, to mark the 9th Maha Yagna (Anniversary) of Beloved Dadaji. An important item of the programme was service of the poor and needy, giving them cloth and cash, visiting poor patients in the local hospitals and distribut-

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ing fruits among them, and feeding brother birds and animals. On the 16th evening, tributes of love and gratitude were paid to Beloved Dadaji.

The programme also included *akhand path* of the *Guru Granth Sahib* and the *Noori Granth* and *langar* (fellowship meals). On the night of the 16th, there was a vigil from 12 midnight to 5 in the morning. The *pandal* was vibrant with *Nam-kirtan.*

Silver Jubilee

St. Mira's High School at Poona will celebrate its Silver Jubilee on the 1st of March. It will be observed as a day of thanksgiving and *yagna.*

St. Mira's School is a centre of new education which seeks to blend knowledge with qualities of character and both with a spirit of sympathy and service. Students, in the words of Beloved Dada, are taught to "clasp God to their hearts and find their purest joy in serving suffering creation."

In connection with the Silver Jubilee Celebrations, an appeal for Rs. 5,00,000/- has been issued. Mr. Woodland Kahler, Marquis de St. Innocent, has sent from America a donation of $3333 (Rs. 25,000/-) towards the Silver Jubilee Fund.

Radhakrishna Daya Dispensary

This Dispensary which was founded by Beloved Dada on 26th January, 1950, celebrated its Silver Jubilee, this year. Dr. Hiranand T. Hathiramani and Dr. Narain H. Hathiramani have dedicated themselves to the service of the dispensary. They both are men with rich minds and radiant hearts. They seek to verify in their life the immortal teaching of Beloved Dada :—"Service of the poor is worship of God!" It was pointed out at the Silver Jubilee celebrations that medicines, etc. worth over two lacs of rupees had been given free to the poor. May the work of the Dispensary grow, from more to more, unto the service of suffering humanity!

Visit to Bombay

Sister Hari P. Vaswani, author of *A Saint of Modern India*, left for Bombay on Saturday, 22nd February. She addressed meetings at different places and gave a talk in English on "Where is My Home?" at Rama Watumall Hall, K. C. College, on Wednesday, 26th February.

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"Truth is God!"

A brother, who wishes to remain anonymous, has donated Rs. 5000/- to the Brotherhood Association. The amount will be treated as an endowment and the annual interest on it will be given away in the form of cash prizes to students of St. Mira's Educational Institutions for speaking on "Love Truth" or "God is Love,"—subjects which were dear to Mahatma Gandhi. The prizes will be awarded every year on January 30,—Mahatma Gandhi's Martyrdom day.

The Two-fold Secret

The 22nd of February was celebrated on the Mira Campus as "Shanti Yagna,"—the day sacred to the memory of Sister Shanti. The celebrations consisted of recitations from various scriptures, kindling of the sacred *havan* fire, and *akahnd path* of the *Noori Granth*. About 175 needy school students received uniforms, as Sister Shanti's *prasad*.

At the evening fellowship meeting, Brother J. P. Vaswani told us that the secret of Sister Shanti's dedicated life was in the two words :—prayer and service. At night, she worshipped the Lord with a garland of tears. At day-time, she worshipped the Lord by serving the poor and needy as His living images. She thus entwined each and every breath of her fragrant life around the Lotus-feet of her Lord. Her one and only aspiration was to become one with the Heavenly Father!

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BELOVED DADAJI

[Sri T. L. Vaswani]

Never despair!

For God is the One Worker, and His works are the works of mercy!

—*T. L. VASWANI*

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